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Declaration by Australian Religious Leaders for Freedom for Xanana Gusmao and East Timor, 12 November 1998

{The following Declaration was made across churches throughout Australia on the 7th anniversary of the Dili Massacre, 12 November 1998:}

"Witnessing the events unfolding in Indonesia which illustrate the burning aspiration for peace and freedom arising in the hearts of all people, we remain particularly aware of the situation in East timor and the voices of the East Timorese people which have been raised again in recent days.

We share the escalating world-wide concern for a just and peaceful settlement of the East Timor question and we join with the ever-increasing number of nations and people who are calling on the government of Indonesia to pursue the following course of action:

1. Undertake an immediate, significant and validated reduction in the Indonesia military presence in East Timor.

2. Free Xanana Gusmao immediately and unconditionally.

3. Allow a referendum in East Timor, under the auspices of the United Nations, to ascertain the freely expressed aspirations of the East Timorese people.

Such actions comply with the international conventions which respect the inherent dignity of each person and promote the inalienable rights of all members of the human family to participate in the establishment of freedom, justice and peace.

We strongly urge the Australian Government to use its good offices withIndonesia and the international community to press for the speedy implementation of these measures. We believe these steps are essentail to peace, human rights and reconciliation in East Timor.

We remember with particular appreciation the allegiance given to Australian soldiers by the East Timorese during World War 2 for which thousands of their people died. We invite all Australians now to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to them by joining our voices to the growing call for peace and freedom in East Timor."

Supported by:
Rev. Antonio Alves - Chaplain, East Timorese Community Sydney
Rev. Gerald Ball - President, Baptist Union NSW
Bishop George Browning - Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Archbishop Peter Carnley - Acting Primate, Anglican Church of Australia
Sr. Margaret Cassidy CSB - President, Australian Conference Leaders of Religious Institutes
Bishop David Cremin - Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney
Bishop Andrew Curnow - Vicar General, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
Ms Cathy Davies - Clerk, Society of Friends (Quakers) NSW
Bishop Hilton Deakin - Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Rev. A. Doherty - Dean, St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney
Ms Patricia Firkin - Presiding Clerk, Society of Friends (Quakers) Australia
Archdeacon Geoff Huard - Georges River Region, Anglican Diocese of Sydney
Bishop Philip Huggins - Anglican Diocese of Grafton
Archbishop Gabriel Gibran - Orthodox Church of Antioch in Australasia
Rev. Cyril Hally - Columban Mission Institute, Sydney
Bishop Peter Ingham - Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

Bishop Michael Malone - Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Rev. Dr. E. David Manton - Moderator, NSW Synod, Uniting Church in AustraliaRev. John Mavor - President, Uniting Church in Australia
Sr. Patricia Powell RSM - Australian Conference Leaders of Religious Institutes
Bishop Patrick Power - Catholic Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Ms Diane Shteinman - President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry
Rev. P.R. Skinner - General Superintendent, Baptist Union of NSW
Mr. Jan de Voogd - Society of Friends (Quakers) NSW

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for Matebian News}